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Public Opinion About Crime in South Carolina

Since 1981, the College of Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina, has conducted an annual "Fear of Crime" Poll. The results, compiled and analyzed under the direction Prof. Gene Stephens, generate great public interest. This year in addition to polling on fear of crime, the poll also included questions about illegal drugs. This special drug abuse poll was funded by a grant from the Governor's Office Division of Public Safety. Among the findings, 75 percent of the respondents said they are willing to pay higher taxes to fund law enforcement efforts to combat drug abuse.

The following are excerpts from the 1988 Fear of Crime/Drug Abuse poll. The poll of 1,269 South Carolinians was conducted early last spring and has a error factor of plus/minus .3 percent.

Fear of Crime Poll 1988

Respondents Answering Yes	1988	1987	1986	1981
Do you think crime in your area has increased in the past year?	51.1%	53.3%	49.8%	62.7%
Are you more concerned about your personal safety today than you were five years ago?	71.2%	68.8%	74.1%	83.0%
Are you more concerned about the safety of your personal property today than you were five years ago?	76.7%	74.4%	77.9%	86.6%
Do you think criminals are more violent today than they were five years ago?	74.5%	70.3%	76.4%	71.1%
Do you keep a gun for protection?	49.8%	45.0%	48.8%	44.2%
Do you keep a dog for protection?	36.3%	36.4%	41.3%	43.8%
Have you installed protective devices in your home?	49.3%	43.1%	50.7%	41.4%

Source: College of Criminal Justice, University of South Carolina

Concern About Drugs:

Would you describe your personal concern about illegal drug abuse as:

<i>Greatly concerned</i>	<i>Concerned</i>	<i>Not very concerned</i>	<i>Unconcerned</i>
66.7%	27.6%	4.1%	1.6%

Do you believe there is a serious drug abuse problem in the community where you live?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>
47.1%	43.6%	9.3%

Do you believe illegal drug abuse has increased, decreased or remained the same in your community in the last year?

<i>Increased</i>	<i>Decreased</i>	<i>Remained the Same</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>
54.1%	6.9%	29.2%	9.8%

Does it appear to you that law enforcement efforts in your community against illegal drug use has increased, decreased or remained the same in your community in the last year?

<i>Increased</i>	<i>Decreased</i>	<i>Remained the Same</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>
38.7%	7.7%	43.7%	9.9%

Do you think your local law enforcement agencies are doing enough to fight drug abuse?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>
49.5%	38.1%	12.4%

Would you support increased funding for law enforcement to fight drug abuse, even if it meant an increase in local taxes?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>
75.6%	17.5%	6.9%

Law enforcement is one approach to combat drug abuse. Education and prevention programs are another approach to combat drug abuse. Which approach -- law enforcement or education/prevention -- do you think is most effective?

<i>Law enforcement</i>	<i>Education/prevention</i>	<i>Equal</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>
19.0%	56.5%	18.8%	5.8%

Source: College of Criminal Justice, University of South Carolina

In some South Carolina communities, law enforcement officers use dogs to sniff out drugs in the schools. Do you favor this practice?

Yes	No	No Opinion
86.3%	9.9%	3.8%

Would you favor using dogs to sniff out drugs in government buildings (e.g. city halls, post offices, courthouses, etc)?

Yes	No	No Opinion
89.3%	6.9%	3.9%

County by County Statistics

The following is a breakdown of the answers to these polling questions by selected counties. The answers for both the 1988 and 1986 polls are listed for comparison where available. An abbreviated version of the question appears on the left. For the full question, please consult the previous graphs.

Yes Answers	Aiken	Anderson	Charleston	Greenville	Richland
Area crime increased?					
1988	55.2%	60.6%	45.1%	47.8%	38.9%
1986	40.8%	61.9%	53.5%	41.3%	29.7%
More concerned about personal safety?					
1988	69.0%	75.8%	77.5%	68.5%	67.5%
1986	77.6%	73.0%	73.2%	70.6%	73.7%
More concerned about property?					
1988	67.2%	87.9%	73.2%	78.4%	77.0%
1986	73.5%	85.7%	71.8%	75.4%	84.2%
Criminals more violent today?					
1988	79.3%	72.7%	70.4%	72.1%	68.3%
1986	81.6%	84.1%	71.8%	67.5%	72.3%
Do you keep a gun?					
1988	48.3%	50.0%	40.9%	46.9%	38.1%
1986	57.1%	60.3%	33.8%	43.7%	37.6%

Source: College of Criminal Justice, University of South Carolina

For the following counties, only 1988 data are available.

<u>Yes Answers</u>	<u>Berkeley</u>	<u>Florence</u>	<u>Horry</u>	<u>Sumter</u>
Area crime increased?	51.9%	75.5%	60.0%	33.3%
More concerned about personal safety?	72.2%	71.7%	71.1%	71.4%
More concerned about property?	75.9%	75.8%	80.0%	81.0%
Criminals more violent?	81.5%	81.1%	68.9%	81.0%
Do you keep a gun?	53.7%	56.6%	48.9%	35.7%

County by County Statistics on Drug Abuse

For the full questions, please consult previous graphs.

	<u>Aiken</u>	<u>Anderson</u>	<u>Berkeley</u>	<u>Charleston</u>
Concern about illegal drugs?				
Greatly concerned	74.1%	66.7%	70.4%	67.6%
Concerned	24.1%	27.3%	27.8%	23.9%
Serious drug problem in the community?				
Yes	44.8%	53.0%	51.9%	49.3%
Has illegal drug abuse increased?				
Yes	56.9%	54.6%	57.4%	52.1%
Community law enforcement efforts have:				
Increased	32.8%	30.3%	48.2%	49.3%
Decreased	12.1%	16.7%	5.7%	8.5%
Stayed the same	48.3%	43.9%	35.2%	36.6%
Local law enforcement doing enough against drug abuse?				
Yes	48.3%	42.4%	44.4%	57.8%
Support increased funding for law enforcement even with tax increase?				
Yes	77.6%	83.3%	83.3%	78.9%

Drug Abuse Poll Continued

	Florence	Greenville	Horry	Richland	Sumter
Concern about illegal drugs?					
Greatly concerned	77.4%	72.1%	68.9%	58.7%	50.0%
Concerned	20.8%	23.4%	31.1%	29.4%	40.5%
Serious drug problem in the community?					
Yes	58.5%	45.1%	42.2%	39.9%	45.2%
Has illegal drug abuse increased?					
Yes	66.0%	55.9%	44.4%	51.6%	69.1%
Community law enforcement efforts have					
Increased	56.6%	32.4%	35.6%	38.1%	40.5%
Decreased	5.7%	5.4%	2.2%	5.7%	0.0%
Stayed the same	34.0%	53.2%	44.4%	42.9%	47.6%
Local law enforcement doing enough against drugs?					
-Yes	49.1%	48.7%	55.6%	49.2%	57.1%
Support increased funding to law enforcement even with tax increase?					
Yes	60.4%	82.0%	71.1%	67.5%	59.5%

New Laws Directed at Drugs Abuse and Trafficking

National and statewide polls indicated the high level of public concern regarding illegal drug abuse and trafficking. Here is a list of bills enacted during the past two years directed at combating illegal drugs.

Statewide Grand Jury (S.577, Sen. Hayes).

If the voters give their approval on the November general election ballot, the State Constitution will be amended to permit the Attorney General to petition the Supreme Court to empanel a statewide grand jury to investigate drug and pornography crimes involving multiple counties. The measure

would permit the state and county grand juries to operate similarly to a federal grand jury: testimony of fact witnesses would be recorded and transcribed, if requested by the Attorney General or solicitor.

In addition, broad subpoena powers would be provided, and transcripts would be available for later impeachment of witnesses and for perjury prosecutions.

Supporters of the measure say that typically, pornography and drug operations extend over one or more county lines, and traditional grand juries (limited in jurisdiction to one county) have great difficulty with investigations and returning indictments. Multi-county or state-wide grand juries, on the other hand, will be able go after the criminals where they operate, and help law enforcement officials track them down and successfully prosecute them.

Creation of a statewide grand jury is question No. 1 on the November 8 ballot.

Signed into law June 3, 1987.

Crack Cocaine (S.102, Sen. J.V. Smith)

This legislation specifically addresses the new and highly dangerous drug known as "crack cocaine."

Anyone possessing less than one gram of crack cocaine is guilty of a misdemeanor. The first offense brings a minimum term of two years, a maximum of five years, and a fine of \$5,000. First offenders may also be required to complete a drug rehabilitation program. A second offense is a felony, with minimum penalties of four years in prison (maximum seven years) and a fine of \$10,000. Third offense is also a felony, bringing a minimum 10 year sentence and a \$15,000 fine. A maximum sentence of 15 years for third offenses is also available.

The manufacture and distribution of crack is now a felony. A first offense brings a minimum of 15 years (maximum 20 years) and \$25,000 fine. Second time offenders and first time offenders who have been convicted of any other drug-related offense can receive a minimum 25 years and a fine of \$50,000. A third offense (or a second offense and two or more drug-related convictions) results in a minimum of 30 years (maximum 40 years) and \$100,000 fine. Possession of one or more grams of crack is *prima facie* evidence of manufacture or distribution.

One section of the act amends part of existing law to make crack distribution near schools a separate offense with a \$10,000 fine and a prison term from 10 to 15 years.

Except for first offenders, persons found guilty of crack cocaine offenses may not have their sentences suspended nor be eligible for probation.

Signed into law June 8, 1987.

Increased Penalties for Drug Trafficking ((H.4114, Rep..Wilkins)

This law increases the penalties for trafficking in marijuana, cocaine, methaqualone and other illegal drugs. The law also prohibits any part of the penalty from being suspended. Any person convicted of a drug trafficking offense under these provisions, and receives a sentence of a mandatory minimum term of 25 years or more, is not eligible for parole, work release or supervised furlough. Any person convicted of conspiracy in connection with these provisions must be sentenced to the full penalty provided under this act and not half of the sentence.

Penalties are as follows:

Marijuana:

For 10 to less than 100 pounds:

1st offense: 1 to 10 years and \$10,000 fine.

2nd offense: 5 to 20 years and \$15,000 fine.

3rd or subsequent offense: 25 years mandatory and \$25,000 fine.

For 100 to less than 2,000 pounds:

25 years mandatory and \$25,000 fine.

For 2,000 to less than 10,000 pounds:

25 years mandatory and \$50,000 fine.

For 10,000 pounds or more:

25 years mandatory to 30 years and \$200,000 fine.

Cocaine

For 10 to less than 28 grams:

1st offense: 3 to 10 years and \$25,000 fine.

2nd offense: 5 to 30 years and \$50,000 fine.

3rd or subsequent offense: 25 to 30 years mandatory and \$50,000 fine.

For 28 to less than 100 grams:

1st offense: 7 to 25 years and \$50,000 fine

2nd offense: 7 to 30 years and \$50,000 fine.

3rd or subsequent offense: 25 to 30 years mandatory and \$50,000 fine.

Cocaine cont'd

- For 100 to less than 200 grams:
 - 25 years mandatory and \$50,000 fine.
- For 200 to less than 400 grams:
 - 25 years mandatory and \$100,000 fine.
- For 400 grams or more:
 - 25 years mandatory to 30 years and \$200,000 fine.

Morphine, opium, salt, isomer or salt of a isomer, including heroin:

- For 4 to less than 14 grams:
 - 1st offense: 7 to 25 years and \$50,000 fine.
 - 2nd offense or subsequent offense: 25 years mandatory and \$100,000 fine.
- For 14 to less than 28 grams:
 - 25 years mandatory and \$200,000 fine.
- For 28 grams or more:
 - 25 to 40 years mandatory and \$200,000 fine.

Methaqualone:

- For 15 to less than 150 grams:
 - 1st offense: 1 to 10 years and \$10,000 fine.
 - 2nd or subsequent offense: 25 years mandatory and \$25,000 fine.
- For 150 to less than 1,500 grams:
 - 25 years mandatory and \$25,000 fine
- For 1,500 grams to less than 15 kilograms:
 - 25 years mandatory and \$50,000 fine.
- For 15 kilograms or more:
 - 25 years mandatory to 30 years and \$200,000 fine.

Signed into law May 29, 1988

Teenage Pregnancy

Last session, the General Assembly approved the Comprehensive Health Education Act, giving the public schools guidelines to follow when instructing on health and sex education issues. In proposing the bill, many of its advocates pointed to the state's teenage pregnancy problem as one of the reasons it should be passed.

Although South Carolina appears to be making some headway against the problem, teenage pregnancy and its impact on infant mortality continue to be an important issue in this state and throughout the South.

This summer the Southern Regional Project on Infant Mortality, a joint effort by the Southern Governors Association and the Southern Legislative Conference, issued a comprehensive report on this issue. Here are excerpts from the report entitled, "Adolescent Pregnancy in the South."

Overview

The United States has one of the highest teenage birth rates among the developed nations. Within the United States, the ten states with the highest percentage of births to teenagers are in the South.

The public costs associated with births to teenagers are exceedingly high. In a single year (FY 1986-87) in the Southern region, \$3.57 billion was spent on welfare, medical and food assistance costs for families begun by a birth to a girl under the age of 20. While public costs can be estimated, it is not possible to put a price tag on the overall economic losses which occur when teenagers and their children do not recover from the setback of an early pregnancy.

The following charts rank the states on the rate and number of teenage pregnancies.

State by State Ranking of
Births to Girls Age 10-14
in the Southern Region
1985

Area	Rate*	Number
Mississippi	3.2	351
Louisiana	2.2	377
SOUTH CAROLINA	2.2	279
Arkansas	2.0	178
Georgia	2.0	467
Alabama	1.9	298
Florida	1.9	641
Texas	1.7	1,079
Tennessee	1.7	294
Maryland	1.6	232
Delaware	1.6	33
North Carolina	1.5	333
Kentucky	1.4	189
Virginia	1.3	256
Oklahoma	1.3	150
Missouri	1.2	209
West Virginia	0.9	63
Southern Region	1.7	5,429
United States	1.2	10,220

*Rate per 1,000 girls age 10-14 years

Source: *Adolescent Pregnancy in the South*, Southern Regional Project on Infant Mortality

State by State Ranking of
Births to Girls Age 15-17
in the Southern Region
1985

Area	Rate*	Number
Mississippi	53.9	3,608
Louisiana	48.4	5,272
Texas	45.7	17,457
Arkansas	44.2	2,430
Georgia	43.2	6,223
Oklahoma	42.3	3,006
Alabama	41.2	3,952
SOUTH CAROLINA	40.3	3,227
Kentucky	40.3	3,462
Tennessee	37.8	4,157
Florida	37.0	8,211
North Carolina	35.0	5,151
Delaware	32.7	458
Missouri	31.8	3,495
West Virginia	31.6	1,422
Maryland	28.6	2,947
Virginia	27.8	3,589
Southern Region	39.6	78,067
United States	31.1	167,789

*Rate per 1,000 girls age 15-17 years.

Source: *Adolescent Pregnancy in the South*, Southern Regional Project on Infant Mortality

Unwed Births

From 1980 to 1985, although the number of births to girls aged 10-17 decreased, the proportion of births to unmarried girls increased in the United States and in all southern states.

- * In 1985, of all unwed births to girls aged 10-17 in the United States, almost half were born to white girls and half to nonwhite girls. In the southern region, 38.3 percent of the unwed births were to white girls and 61.7 percent were to nonwhite girls.
- * From 1980 to 1985, in both the United States and the southern region, unwed births to white girls increased whereas unwed births to nonwhite girls decreased.

Concern is often expressed regarding increases in the percentage of births to unmarried girls. Coupled with a decrease in the percentage of girls placing their babies for adoption, this means there are proportionately more single parent households resulting from teen births.

Risks to the Infant

Health

Adolescents are more likely to receive inadequate prenatal care. In 1985, 20 percent of mothers younger than 15 and 13 percent of mothers aged 15-17 had no prenatal care or began prenatal care in the last trimester.

Adolescents aged 17 and younger are twice as likely to deliver babies who weigh less than 5 1/2 pounds at birth, and these low birth weight babies are 40 times more likely to die in the first four weeks of life than are normal weight newborns.

Education

Two studies have found that the probability of repeating a grade was 40 percent higher for adolescents born to early childbearers as compared to 20 percent for adolescents born to older mothers.

Children of teenage mothers generally have lower scores on intelligence tests and poorer school performance. This is attributed to early maternal age and to a number of factors associated with teenage childbearing, including lower socio-economic status, family size and structure, and the mother's education.

Family Stability

White children born to mothers 15 and younger are nearly five times more likely to live in foster homes or with adoptive parents than are children of mothers in their twenties. The likelihood that black children would live in foster homes or with adoptive parents

was four times greater for children of early childbearers than for children born to mothers in their twenties.

For married parents younger than 18, the divorce rate is three times greater than for married parents who have their first child after age 20.

The probability of a child living only with his mother is greater for children born to teenage mothers.

Economics

Two-thirds of children younger than six in families begun by a teen birth are living below the poverty level.

Risks to the Teenage Mother

Health

Adolescent mothers have an increased chance of suffering pregnancy complications. Younger mothers are more likely to have closely spaced births which increase the likelihood of low birth weight. In 1985, 36 percent of second births to mothers aged 15-19 occurred within 18 months of their first birth.

Education

In a follow-up of women aged 20-29, 68 percent of mothers who had their first births before age 15 and 51 percent of mothers who had their first birth between ages 15 and 17 had not completed 12 years of schooling.

Economic

The lifetime earnings of a teenage mother are about half the income of a mother who first gave birth in her twenties. Of welfare (AFDC) mothers younger than 30, 80 percent had their first child in their teens.

Risks to the Teenage Father

Adolescent males who father children are also placed at a disadvantage. In general, adolescent fathers have lower incomes, less education and more children than do men who postpone having children until their twenties.

Boys who become fathers before the age of 18 were 40 percent less likely to finish high school as compared to those who postponed fatherhood.

Public Costs of Teenage Childbearing

The public costs of births to teenagers are exceedingly high. National estimates are that at any point in time, approximately 53 percent of the AFDC caseload consists of families begun by teen births, even though only 4 percent of these welfare families are currently headed by a teen mother.

In a single year (FY 1986-87), in the 17 Southern states surveyed, \$3.57 billion was spent on welfare, medical and food assistance costs for families begun to a girl under the age of 20. This estimate represents spending for all families started with a teen birth regardless of the present age of the mother. It is based on service and administrative costs to three public programs -- Medicaid, Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Food Stamps.

Not included in the estimates are additional public costs which can result from a teenage pregnancy, such as public housing, child protective services, foster care and other local, state or federal sponsored services.

The following chart shows the public expenditure by state for the southern region. The variation between the states reflects the interstate differences in population, welfare caseloads and benefit levels.

Public Costs of Teenage Pregnancy
FY 1986-1987

<u>State</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>AFDC</u>	<u>Food Stamps</u>	<u>Medicaid</u>
Alabama	117,479,000	43,475,000	27,238,000	46,766,000
Arkansas	82,017,000	30,689,000	22,667,000	28,661,000
Delaware	35,799,000	16,991,000	8,529,000	10,279,000
Florida	378,651,000	182,161,000	94,529,000	101,961,000
Georgia	355,434,000	142,962,000	74,036,000	138,436,000
Kentucky	179,427,000	83,297,000	38,105,000	58,025,000
Louisiana	252,307,000	101,189,000	60,598,000	90,520,000
Maryland	321,580,000	151,664,000	43,956,000	125,970,000
Mississippi	125,934,000	34,167,000	49,097,000	42,670,000
Missouri	244,772,000	123,490,000	46,296,000	74,986,000
North Carolina	232,922,000	110,993,000	37,398,000	84,531,000
Oklahoma	135,310,000	71,124,000	28,911,000	35,274,000
SOUTH CAROLINA	132,401,000	62,656,000	33,374,000	36,371,000
Tennessee	203,994,000	76,396,000	62,811,000	64,787,000
Texas	473,548,000	187,633,000	123,731,000	162,184,000
Virginia	198,332,000	110,049,000	35,997,000	52,286,000
West Virginia	105,689,000	42,173,000	34,760,000	28,756,000
Region	3,575,596,000	1,571,099,000	822,033,000	1,182,464,000

Source: *Adolescent Pregnancy in the South*, Southern Regional Project on Infant Mortality